



(U//~~FOUO~~) History Today - 30 April 2008

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(U) The American-British Weather Central, a consolidated organization at 15th Air Force headquarters in Bari, Italy, used decrypts of German messages to prepare weather information used in bombing Germany and Central Europe in 1944 and 1945. About fifteen officers at the 15th (out of more than one hundred) were cleared for SIGINT.

(U) Weather posed a major challenge to air operations in the last two years of World War II. Systems moved quickly, limiting periods of clear weather in which bombing or photoreconnaissance could be conducted. In addition, to avoid flak, Allied bombers had to fly over enemy territory at 20,000 feet, so knowledge of wind patterns at that height was essential.

(U) The military meteorologists prepared three-dimensional models of the weather situation at six-hour intervals. The proximity to the oceans and wind currents from the mountainous regions of Europe made for interesting variations and rapid changes in weather developments.

(U) The weather analysts had available information on weather patterns developing in the Atlantic, as reported by Allied sources, as well as reports from Allied reconnaissance aircraft operating over enemy territory. Among other sources for weather information were plaintext intercepts from Spain, Portugal, and Turkey.

(U) Decrypts of German weather messages allowed the American officers to evaluate and verify -- or not -- their predictions for weather patterns that moved west to east. (It should be noted that German encrypting of the plaintext messages from the three neutral countries provided good cribs for solving the German weather ciphers).

(U) While German and U.S. forces still battled in Italy, German weather reports also were valuable in understanding storms or other weather patterns that formed in the Gulf of Genoa and moved down the peninsula.

(U) Decrypted German weather reports also proved invaluable for use by Royal Air Force flights that provided weaponry and military supplies to partisans in Yugoslavia and Poland.

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